

A  
DEMONSTRATION  
OF THE  
INSUFFICIENT  
BOTH OF  
REASON and REVELATION,  
(Separately or Jointly consider'd)  
IN  
MATTERS OF RELIGION.  
With a Conclusion, shewing what is  
SUFFICIENT.

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*Philosopher! Where are thy Ideas? Where is Truth, Certainty,  
Evidence, so much talk'd of?*

Lord Shaftesbury's Characteristics.

*For it is written, I will destroy the Wisdom of the Wise, and  
will bring to nothing the Understanding of the Prudent.*

*Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer  
of this World? Hath not God made foolish the Wisdom of  
this World?*

1 Cor. Chap. i. ver. 19, 20.

Works done before the Grace of Christ, and the Inspiration  
of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God—Neither do they  
make Men meet to receive Grace. —Yea, we doubt not  
but they have the Nature of Sin.

They also are to be had accursed, that presume to say that  
every Man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he  
professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his Life according  
to that Law, and the Light of Nature.

*Artic. 13, and 18, of the Church of England.*

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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LONDON, Printed: and sold by J. Roberts, near the  
Oxford-Arms, in Warwick-lane. 1731.  
(Price One Shilling.)





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( i )



A

# DEDICATION

*To the* ADVOCATES *for*  
Reason *and* Revelation.

*Gentlemen,*

**T**HOUGH every  
Book with Impar-  
tial Judges, will  
stand or fall by its own in-  
trinsic Worth or Imper-  
fection,

fection, and consequently no *Apology* can excuse, or *Patronage* protect it: yet, lest the *Title* of this Performance, (which is of so extraordinary and uncommon a Nature,) might surprise the Reader, and create some Prejudices that would interfere with an Impartial Judgment, we thought ourselves oblig'd to say a Word or two, in order to remove what might occasion any injurious Suspicions, tho' we are not insensible that an Apologetic Dedication to a *Production of this Kind*, will (at first sight)



sight) be thought as new as the Publication of the Production it self.

BUT give us leave to say, that when the *Scope* and *Design* of this Undertaking is considered, and the *Conclusion* duly weigh'd, it will be found so far from *undermining the Truth of Religion*, that it is only subservient to the *restoring its primitive Purity and Perfection*; which has been intirely disregarded in the late Controversy. For that *Reason is Insufficient* in discovering the Will of God, is manifest from hence,

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that

that we have no other Medium by which we can judge of the Will of any Being, but from the KNOWLEDGE of his *Nature*; and that the *Nature* of God is *incomprehensible*, is allow'd by all: *Can'st thou by searching find out God, or know the Almighty to Perfection?* How then can we, being ignorant of his *Nature*, judge concerning his *Will*: and if unacquainted with his *Will*, how *practise* or *obey* it? And that *External Traditional Revelation* is *not sufficient*, is as manifest from hence, that Revelation it self abounds with



with numerous Proofs of its *own* Insufficiency without *Supernatural Assistance*, or *immediate Inspiration of the Spirit*, to enable us to judge of the *Sense* of the *written Word*; and that *external Revelation* can only be understood by the *Light* of the *Internal Spirit*, which is the GUIDE we are contending for; and novel as it may seem, is the *same* which the *Apostles, Fathers and Primitive Christians* taught and seal'd with their *Blood*, which all *Orthodox Divines* have ever strenuously contended for, and which is the  
ex-

express Doctrine of the  
*Articles of the Church of*  
 England, and other Con-  
 fessions.

WE can hardly imagine,  
 since this appears to be  
 our Design, that you can  
 be so disingenuous to ac-  
 cuse us of advancing a  
 Doctrine *inconsistent with*  
*the Principles of Revela-*  
*tion and the Church,* or  
 draw so invidious a Con-  
 clusion, that this *under-*  
*mines and betrays* what  
 only it was meant to sup-  
 port and defend: Which is  
*true Primitive Christianity.*

BUT



BUT whatever *Miscon-*  
*structions* this Treatise may  
be subject to, we are con-  
scious it was calculated  
to CONVINCe, and not *of-*  
*fend* ; so that if it should  
not in all its Parts be  
exactly conformable to  
TRUTH, yet we have  
all the Pleasure and Sa-  
tisfaction the Consciouf-  
ness of a good *Inten-*  
*tion* can inspire. And  
whatever *Offence* this may

( viii )

*Sacred Guide, and consequently to God and Mankind.*

*We are, Gentlemen, with all*

*Due Submission and Regard,*

*Your most sincere and*

*Most respectful Friends.*





A  
DEMONSTRATION  
OF THE  
*INSUFFICIENCY, &c.*

**T**HE Controversies between the *Patrons of Reason* and *Revelation*, have of late run very high ; and the Publick has been entertain'd with numerous Productions on these Subjects ; *Pastoral Letters, Addreses, Discourses, Pleas, Demurrers, Joinders, Rejoinders and Sur-Re-*  
B *joinders*

*joinders* have been play'd off, against each other, with more Warmth than Judgment: and the War has been wag'd, with such *equal Force and Abilities*, that it is difficult to determine, to which the Victory should be attributed; tho' all rational and discerning Men must confess, that very few *Master-Strokes* have been given, or *Specimens of Skill* exhibited, on either Side.

THE grand Point in Controversy, between these *harmless* and *innocent* Disputants, is, *Whether REASON is sufficient, in Matters of Religion, without the Help of Revelation?* One Party has endeavoured to prove; that Reason *solely, is sufficient*: The other, that Revelation must necessarily be called in, as an *Aid or Ally to Reason*, in order to compleat the

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*Sufficiency*;



*Sufficiency* ; but both agree in this, That *Reason and Revelation*, (*separately or jointly considered*,) *must be sufficient*.

IT is needless to repeat the several Arguments these *good Men* have recourse to, in Support of the Cause they espouse, since the World is acquainted with them already, in their various *Productions* ; of which little notice will be taken in the Course of these Observations ; which will principally be confined, to the Proof of the Title, by a regular and connected Series of Argument, taken from the *Nature of Religion*, and of *Mankind* ; from whence the *Follies and Absurdities*, of all these Writers, will be fully manifested.

IN Order therefore to form, a *clear and distinct* Judgment of this

Proposition, “ *That Reason and Revelation, (separately or jointly considered) are not sufficient in Matters of Religion,*” it will be necessary to consider.

1st, — *What is meant by the Term SUFFICIENCY.*

2dly, — *What Religion is.*

3dly, — *The Powers and Abilities of Human Nature.*

4thly, — *The Circumstances and Conditions of Mankind.*

5thly, — *The Nature of a written Revelation.*

6thly, — *The different Opinions and Sentiments of Mankind, concerning Religion.*

THE Term SUFFICIENT has so ambiguous a Meaning with these  
Wri-



Writers, (*who darken Counsel, by Words without Knowledge,*) that it is highly proper, to define and settle, a *distinct* Meaning of it.

ONE of the late *Whiffers* in Controversy, defines a *sufficient Guide*, to be *such a Capacity or Power in Man, when duly exercis'd, as is sufficient to answer the Purposes of true Religion, without any Thing superadded*; and when he thinks he has shewn, the *bare Possibility of a Man's duly exercising this Power*, he fancies, his Work is finished, and that, the *Sufficiency of Reason in Matters of Religion is demonstrated*: Whereas, if *Reason and Revelation, (separately or jointly consider'd,)* are not *sufficient*, in whatsoever *State, Circumstance or Condition, Mankind are*, Then it is impossible they should

should be *sufficient* in Matters of Religion.

So that SUFFICIENCY truly defin'd, is a *Capacity or Power in all Mankind, in all Circumstances and Conditions, and at all Times and Places, to discern and exercise Religion* : or else, it would be the most absurd Thing in the World to say, that *Reason or Revelation, are sufficient in Matters of Religion* : for if this *Sufficiency*, does not reach all the Circumstances already mentioned, it is, (according to these Writers themselves,) not *sufficient to Mankind* ; but only to a *particular Number of Men* : and consequently in that Case, *neither Reason nor Revelation would be sufficient in Matters of Religion*, which must necessarily be suppos'd to *affect all Men*.

T H E



THE Term *Sufficiency*, being thus settled and defin'd, it will be proper before the Argument is enter'd upon, to define *True Religion*.

RELIGION is the DUE Knowledge and Practice of our Duty to God and to each other, to which Definition, all or most of these Writers agree; and against those who do not, the Conclusion is yet the stronger. And to shew that both *Reason and Revelation*, (*separately or jointly consider'd*), as Mankind are constituted and circumstanced, must necessarily be insufficient in Matters of Religion, it will be absolutely necessary, to take a View of Mankind in two Lights; 1<sup>st</sup>, as to their *Morals*, and, 2<sup>dly</sup>, their *Religion*. In which we shall consider, their *Powers*  
and

*and Abilities, Circumstances and Conditions.*

IF we make a Judgment of the *Sufficiency, or Insufficiency of Reason and Revelation, in Matters of Religion*, from the Behaviour of Mankind to each other, and the general Tenour of their Actions in *civil Society*, we should immediately and justly conclude, both *Reason and Revelation, (separately or jointly consider'd,)* *insufficient*. For whatever may be said of Men, with Regard to their *natural Liberty or Power* to be religiously honest, by Way of Objection to this Method of enquiring, into the supposed *Sufficiency of Reason or Revelation*, it amounts to nothing ; nor in the least assists to shew, the *Sufficiency* of either. The PRACTICE of Mankind, is the only  
*true*



*true* Way, that we can form any Judgment, of their *Powers, Abilities or Dispositions* : which are not to be known, by *metaphysical abstract Reasoning*, but from what we SEE and EXPERIENCE. From whence it is most evident, that the constant *Temptations* they are under, their different *Passions, Interests, Views, and Situations in the World*, (all of which, in almost every Instance of Life, conspire to make Men disregard the Practice of what Religion enjoins) are infinitely too *strong*, to be under the *Power or Influence either of Reason or Revelation* : neither of which, are hardly in any Degree *sufficient to restrain* Mankind, when the Views of worldly Advantage come in *Competition*. The *Hopes* that many Villanies will lie

*conceal'd* from the World ; and that it will be in the Power of the Offender, to *commute the Matter, by a Death-bed Repentance*, are two such *salutary* Considerations, and so able to *support and bear us out*, against the *Checks* and *vain Efforts*, of so *ductile and complaisant* a Conscience as we are generally possess'd of, that little Opposition is made, when *Pride, Lust, Avarice, Dishonesty, Revenge, Hatred, or any other of that hatefull Train*, meet with their proper Objects : But as no Arguments can exemplify this Truth, so clearly as the PRACTICE of the World, the Reader may cast his Eye around, take a comprehensive and distinct View of his *Species*, and then judge, whether they are truly describ'd.

W H E N



WHEN this is throughly consider'd, it will appear, that the Creature's *Power of restraining*, is not *equal*, nor bears any *Proportion*, to to the *Influence* of his *Passions*; and that he is so *framed* and *constituted*, as to render it almost impossible, (*cæteris paribus*,) for him to hold the *SCALE*, in that *Ballance* or *Equilibrium*, which *Religion* requires of him.

IF we consider Mankind under the Influence of Religion, we are satisfy'd, that much the greatest Part of them, have always, at least as far as we can trace by History, been enslav'd by *Priests*, *Impostors*, and *Tyrants*; whose *Thirst* after *Power* and *Arbitrary Sway*, and the Means they have had recourse to, in securing the Possession of them,

have had such terrible Effects on the Minds of those whom they govern'd, as to *obscure*, and even *totally obliterate*, all Sense of *Right* and *Wrong*, *Humanity*, and *Social Affection*.

IT will certainly be agreed, that under these Circumstances, where the People are *foreclos'd all Opportunities*, of coming at any Knowledge, that might be of Use to them, in the Improvement or Recovery, of an enslav'd Understanding, they must necessarily *persevere in the Practice*, of what their *Leaders* teach them, from an Apprehension that they ought to obey, what (with such *awfull Solemnity*) they are *taught* : and being thus *disengag'd* from the Tyes of *Humanity* and *natural Affection* towards their *Species*,



*cies*, we find by Experience, they are always ready to persecute and distress every Individual, who entertains different Sentiments from themselves; and this not because they are *determin'd* to be *cruel* and *unjust*, but because they really believe it to be the *Exercise of true Religion*; and for the *Honour* and *Service* of God.

IT is the most weak and childish Objection imaginable to say, that these unhappy Creatures situated in Parts of the Globe, where Darkness and Ignorance, Imposture and Credulity make eternal Night, are, notwithstanding this, *capable upon the Principles merely of Reason, to discern and practise true Religion*; which is impossible, under these Circumstances. When all the *Avenues* to the Mind are clos'd up, it

must remain uninform'd : We never yet found Men capable of Information, or *Reasoning*, while they were *beset and incompassed on every Side*, with the most extravagant *Superstition* and *Enthusiasm*. And it is romantic to suppose they could *know their Duty, from a Revelation which never reach'd them* : That is a Point too well settled to be call'd in Question ; for every Man of the least Discernment sees at once, that no *Guide* can be *sufficient* to a Man in Matters of Religion, which he *never heard, nor knew any thing of*.

It may be objected, that tho' Mankind in this Situation, *were not able to know or exercise true Religion*, yet it does not thence follow, that Reason is *insufficient* in Matters of Religion ; since they have by "*Nature*



“ *ture a Power or Capacity (which*  
 “ *if duly exercis'd) is sufficient for*  
 “ *those Purposes.*

THE Answer is exceeding plain,  
 That if this *natural Capacity* which  
 is talk'd of, is not *sufficient to sup-*  
*port Mankind, and bear 'em out, a-*  
*gainst the Influence of false Teach-*  
*ing ; the pious Cheats and holy Jug-*  
*gles that have been introduced into*  
*the World, to enslave the Under-*  
*standings of Mankind, and prepare*  
*'em for absolute Submission, to a*  
*wicked and corrupt Set of Men,*  
*(whose principal Business in Life, it*  
*has been to scatter Ruin and Confu-*  
*sion, among the whole Race of Man-*  
*kind, and to dispossess them of every*  
*amiable Quality : )* Then, it is the  
 greatest Absurdity imaginable to say,  
 that Men had by Nature a Capacity  
 to

to discern and exercise true Religion.

IF there be any Meaning in these Words, "*that all Men have by Nature a Capacity to know and exercise true Religion,*" it must be this, That every Man, however or whenever bred, educated, or situated in the World, can notwithstanding, discern the Folly and Imposition, of all false Teaching in Matters of Religion; and be able to guard and protect himself against it; or else it is very ridiculous to affirm, that *all Men have by Nature a Capacity to know and exercise true Religion*: and that this is impossible, we have prov'd already.

THE next Thing which naturally falls under Consideration, is the *Nature of a Written Revelation.*

THE



THE only Medium, (except *immediate Inspiration from God*, and that is entirely out of the Question with these Writers) by which a Revelation is said to have been convey'd to Mankind, is by WRITTEN TRADITION ; which is not only not *universal*, and consequently *seems* to want, one of the *principal Marks*, by which a Revelation from God, should be *distinguish'd* from all false and pretended Revelations ; but is in its *Nature*, greatly subject to be *misunderstood*, and to *Error*, *Change*, and *Alteration*, thro' the *Variety* of *Translations*, and the *Incapacity* of one *Language*, to express the TRUE *Meaning* of another : and as Mr. *Locke*, (in whom some of the Contenders for Revelation, thro' an Incapacity to judge,

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of

of the true Sense of that Author, have very incautiously plac'd the utmost Confidence) truly says, " It is " not to be wonder'd at, that the " Will of God, when CLOATHED " IN WORDS, should be liable to " that Doubt and Uncertainty, " which unavoidably attend, that " sort of Conveyance." Now a *Revelation*, (*according to Human Reason*) can in no other Sense be esteem'd *sufficient*, in *Matters of Religion*, than as it conveys to Mankind CLEARLY and DISTINCTLY, the Will of God: But if a *written Revelation* is in its Nature, subject to be misunderstood, and liable to unavoidable *Doubt*, and *Uncertainty*; then it follows, that we know not CERTAINLY wherein it does, or does not contain TRULY, the Will of  
I God;



God; and consequently a written *Revelation*, cannot be *sufficient*, in Matters of Religion ; of the Truth of which, the numerous Train of Interpreters, who have *infested* the World, ever since *Revelation* came into it, are an infallible Proof.

BUT there has lately been sent into the World, a Book *intituled*, *The Usefulness, Truth, and Excellency, of the Christian Religion defended, against the Objections contained in a late Book, intituled, Christianity as old as the Creation.* In which, among innumerable other *absurd* and *contradictory Positions*, that will in due Season be shewn to the Publick, is contained the following ; “ That *nothing can*  
 “ *be more perverse or unreasonable*  
 “ *than to insist, that it ought to have*  
 D 2 “ *been*

“ *been absolutely impossible, that the*  
 “ *first Propagators of the Christian*  
 “ *Revelation, should have been de-*  
 “ *ceiv'd.* Shall we reject (says he)  
 “ a *Probability* that they were not  
 “ *deceiv'd*, which in Affairs of the  
 “ *greatest Moment 'tis reckon'd*  
 “ *Madness to dispute, only because*  
 “ *it is possible they might?*” And  
 the same Writer tells us afterwards,  
 that the *highest Evidence, Chri-*  
*stianity has for its being authentic,*  
*goes no further, than Probability:*  
 CERTAINTY it does not reach; and  
 yet he supposes it *sufficient in Mat-*  
*ters of Religion, notwithstanding it*  
*is not universal.* Which being in  
*some Degree* inconsistent, with the  
 Consequences we have drawn, from  
 what we have already laid down,  
 concerning the *Nature of a written*  
 Reve-



*Revelation*, and with what this Writer has, in several other Parts of his Book has asserted, (whose *Premisses* generally, are so much at Variance with his *Conclusions*, that the *latter* seldom infer any thing, which is contain'd in the *former* ;) two or three Observations may properly enough be made, in order to render what he has said *consistent with it self* ; which is an Undertaking the more grateful, as it is in behalf of one, who tho' he *seems not to have aim'd, at proving the Truth of this Proposition, that* “ Reason and Re-  
 “ velation separately or jointly con-  
 “ sider'd, are not sufficient in Mat-  
 “ ters of Religion :” Yet it must be own'd by all who have had Patience enough to go thro' so painful and dull a Performance, that he has  
 said

saïd much in *Support* of it ; particularly, with regard to the *total Insufficiency of Reason* : And has only failed in a *Demonstration*, from the *Want* of that Understanding, which is necessary in the Art of *drawing right Conclusions*.

IT is presum'd he will allow God, to be, an *infinitely WISE, GOOD and POWERFUL Being* ; which being taken for granted, it will not only appear, that *the* first Propagators of the Christian Religion, could not possibly be deceiv'd or impos'd upon ; but also, that the Evidence, for the Authentickness of the Christian Religion, must amount to CERTAINTY ; or else it cannot REASONABLY be suppos'd, that God was the Author of it.



IF *God* intended, to send a Revelation of his Will into the World, *Then it was absolutely impossible, that those whom He appointed as the Propagators, should deliver that to the World, as the Will of God, which in reality was not so: for if this was POSSIBLE, then God's Intention of sending a Revelation into the World MIGHT have been perverted.* But that is an Absurdity; because it supposes, that notwithstanding God thought a Revelation *expedient* and *necessary* for Men's Happiness, and determined to give it them, yet it MIGHT POSSIBLY not have been truly convey'd; which is a Contradiction: For as He wanted neither WISDOM to *frame*, a suitable Revelation, nor GOODNESS to  
*give*

give it, nor POWER to convey it *truly* to Mankind ; it follows, that whenever He did vouchsafe to give that *Revelation*, it was IMPOSSIBLE for it not to have been TRULY convey'd. If it was *impossible* for it not to have been *truly* convey'd, then it follows, *that the first Propagators, could not possibly have been deceiv'd, or impos'd upon.*

AND as a *Revelation* from God, must necessarily have been *truly* convey'd, so it must be *distinct, clear, and intelligible* ; not *subject to Doubt or Uncertainty ; Error or Change* ; the POSSIBILITY of which, must unavoidably be excluded the Nature of a *Revelation*, from a Being, who wanted neither *Wisdom, Goodness, or Power*, to enable Him so to speak to his Creatures,



tures, that 'twas *impossible* they should *misunderstand* Him.

FOR if God, intended his Creatures to whom He revealed himself, should *understand* Him, (and 'tis an Absurdity to say He did not, when at the same time 'tis allow'd, 'twas for their Sakes only, He gave 'em a Revelation;) then the only *possible Reason*, (according to *Human Understanding*,) that can be assign'd, why he did not reveal himself in such a manner, as to render it *impossible*, for his Creatures to misapprehend Him, must be, his Want either of *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, or *Power*; to assert which, is *Blasphemy*; and consequently, the Evidence must amount to CERTAINTY.

BUT this good Man is very much surprized to find, that so great a

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Degree

Degree of Probability, for the Truth and Authentickness of the Christian Religion, should not be of equal Weight with Probability in other Affairs.

Indeed, says he, “ what is it but  
 “ Probability, that is the great  
 “ Spring of Human Actions, and  
 “ determines their most important  
 “ Pursuits; What but a credible  
 “ Testimony, a Testimony not strictly  
 “ ly infallible, that decides in all  
 “ Courts of Judicature, even where  
 “ our most valuable Properties, and  
 “ even Life it self, are concerned?”

There is no Doubt but he thought this a *happy* Illustration, and fully proved that *Probability*, was the most which could be required, for a Revelation from God.



WE shan't here determine, how *probable* or *improbable* the Evidence for Revelation is ; the *thinking* Part of Mankind are well satisfied concerning that already, but rather enquire how far this Illustration of the Author's, *reconciles* only *Probability of Evidence*, with a *Revelation from God*.

THE principal Misfortune which attends all the Writers in this *Train*, is, that in the Defence of their *Systems*, they are obliged to bring the *Author of the Universe upon a Level with his Creatures*, and take from him *all those Attributes which constitute his Character*.

WE have a very notable Instance of this before us ; the Honest Man asks, “ What but Probability is the  
“ great Spring of Human Actions,

“ and determines their most impor-  
 “ tant Pursuits, &c ? ” He should  
 have ask’d at the same time, in or-  
 der to have made out his seeming  
 Parallel, What but *Probability* is  
 the great *Spring of Divine Actions*,  
 and determines the Pursuits and  
 Actions of God ? For the Argu-  
 ment, according to him, stands  
 thus : Because Mankind are *finite*  
 Creatures, and therefore must un-  
 avoidably, in many Instances, de-  
 termine and act upon *Probability*,  
 and assent to what appears to be  
*most probable* ; Therefore it is e-  
 qually reasonable to conclude, that  
 God, who possesses *all Wisdom, Good-  
 ness, and Power*, should give a *Re-  
 velation of his Will to his Creatures*,  
 the Evidence for the Truth of which,  
 ought



ought not to extend further than *Probability*.

AND our sagacious Author is so unhappy, as not to see what creates the Difference in the two Cases : but for the sake of the World, with whom it seems, (from the most *imperfect* and *contradictory Scheme*, that was ever yet the Product of one Man's Brain) He stands in a very fair and conspicuous Point of Light ; we will, with all becoming *Deference to the Character of that Being he has treated in a Manner so entirely new*, fairly state this Matter, and show, even to the Understanding of the meanest of his Readers, whence the Difference arises.

As the *Powers* and *Abilities* of Human Nature are limited and confined, Error and Mistake are unavoidable ;

avoidable ; and even in many Things of Importance and Moment to us.

It is not in the Power of *Human Wisdom*, to distribute Justice among Mankind concerning Controversies that arise relating to *Facts*, without a very great regard to the *credible Testimony of Witnesses* ; and yet we see how often that proves an *Insufficient Guide* : But it is admitted, this is no Argument against the Use of the Guide, which, fallible as it is, is the only Medium by which we are enabled to come at the Knowledge, and form a Judgment of many Things, that highly concern us. So that the Reason why Mankind ought to be determin'd in their Pursuits by *credible Testimony*, is because they are not furnish'd with NATURAL *Abilities, to discern Things clearly*  
and



*and distinctly as they are ; and therefore are obliged to resolve and act upon Probability, and those Degrees of Evidence, which appear to be a sufficient Ground of Rational Pursuits.*

BUT there can be no Reason given why God, who *sees and knows all Things perfectly*, should so *reveal Himself* to his Creatures, that the *Evidence* for his *Revelation*, should reach no further than *Probability*. This is to suppose *God an Arbitrary, Capricious Being ;* who rather *chuses* to leave his Creatures in *Doubt and Uncertainty* concerning the *Truth* of what is *essential to their Happiness*, than to bless 'em with a *Certainty of Evidence ;* which is inconsistent with the Attributes of *Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Power.*

*Power.* To illustrate this by an Instance, which seems to reach the Point in Controversy.

THE SOLE *Reason* why a *wise and good Man*, (to whose Hands the *Happiness of the People* is committed,) is *oblig'd* in many Instances, to determine upon *credible Testimony not strictly infallible*, and to distribute Justice upon the Principles of *Uncertainty*, is because his *Natural Powers and Abilities are limited*, and consequently render it *impossible for him to act upon Certainty*; therefore it should seem reasonable to conclude that God, who is all PERFECTION, and wanted neither of those *Attributes* which *disabled* the *wise, impartial and good Man* from acting upon the Principles of *Certainty*, would *so reveal himself*, that the

*Evi-*



*Evidence for the Authentickness of his Revelation, would amount to Certainty ; and carry such internal and irresistible Proofs of its Authenticity, as would render it beyond all Possibility of Doubt or Uncertainty.*

FOR if this be not the Case of a Revelation from God, which must necessarily be suppos'd to arise, from the *Uncertainty* and *Insufficiency* of *human Reason*, and as this Writer says, “ to  
 “ recover Mankind to the Knowledge  
 “ of the one true God, the Maker  
 “ and Governour of the Universe, and  
 “ to just and worthy Notions of his  
 “ Perfections and Providence,” Revelation would be of no *Advantage* to Mankind ; and instead of being a PERFECT GUIDE, would be as *uncertain*, and as *little to be depended on*, as that which gave Occasion to it.

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AND

AND indeed if the Reason which this Author gives in Page 18, for the *Insufficiency* of *Philosophy*, or the *Reason* of Mankind, to REFORM the World, without the *Help* of a particular Revelation from Heaven, be a just one, it is in reality *equally true* of *Revelation*. He says, “ Whatever *Philosophy* or Reason was capable of in the abstract Nature of the Thing, it is plain in fact it did not answer this End, and farther there was very little reason to expect this desirable Effect from it ; for very few of the People had either *Leisure* or *Inclination* to attend the Schools of the *Philosophers*, or if they had, their Lectures of Morality were not plain simple Precepts, adapted to vulgar Understandings, but such abstract Reasonings, as are above



“ the Capacity of the generality of  
 “ Mankind; and which very proba-  
 “ bly, instead of fixing them in *clear*  
 “ and *distinct* Principles, would have  
 “ puzzled and confounded their *na-*  
 “ *tural Notions* of Good and Evil.”

AND to follow this Author's notable Example (*which he hath wisely given us,*) We may with equal Truth say, that whatever *Revelation* was *capable* of in the *abstract Nature* of the Thing, it is plain in Fact it has not answer'd that End, *i. e.* the REFORMATION of the World. *And farther there was very little reason to expect this desirable Effect from it ; for very few of the People have either Leisure, Learning, or Inclination to attend to the various, perplex'd, unintelligible Disputes and Controversies, that have constantly been on foot in the World,*

*concerning the Meaning of the Christian Revelation ; or if they had, the great Variety of learned Distinctions, and Criticisms, concerning a Language that few or none understand, were not simple and plain, or adapted to vulgar Understandings ; but such abstract, subtle, intricate, dark, and mysterious Reasonings, as were above the Capacity of the generality of Mankind ; and which, instead of fixing the People in clear and distinct Principles, have puzzled and confounded their natural Notions of Good and Evil.*

THUS is it proved at large, (*upon the Principles of mere Reason*) that 'tis not only impossible, that those whom God appointed as the first Propagators of his Revelation, should be deceiv'd or impos'd upon : But  
that



that a *Revelation* from God, must be *distinct, clear, and intelligible*, not *subject to Doubt, or Uncertainty, Error, or Change* ; and consequently, that the *Evidence* for the *Authenticness* of it, must amount to *Certainty*.

As to the Author's Arguments, or rather *Words*, by which he attempts, (upon the *Principles merely of Reason*) to vindicate the Conduct of Providence in not making his Revelation known to ALL Mankind ; the Folly and destructive Tendency of them, with Regard to God's Moral Character, with a *Huddle* of other Absurdities, that are *scatter'd* in almost every Page of the Book, will be shewn to the World by a much abler Hand : But one Thing may be here observ'd, without breaking in upon that Design.

WHEN

WHEN He endeavours to shew, the *Expedience and Necessity of a Revelation from God*, he urges the DEPLORABLE Condition of ALL Mankind, as a Reason, for God's sending a *Revelation* of his *Will* into the World.

And this being the unhappy Situation of ALL his Creatures; “ *and*  
 “ *the State and Circumstances of the*  
 “ World in GENERAL, plainly requi-  
 “ ring the extraordinary Assistance  
 “ of a Revelation, to recover Man-  
 “ kind to the knowledge of the  
 “ one true God, the Maker and  
 “ Governour of the Universe, and  
 “ to just and worthy Notions of  
 “ his Perfections and Providence:  
*God, as Father of the Universe, and*  
*a Benevolent Being, who is no Re-*  
*specter of Persons, and who equally*  
*regarded, and stood equally related*



*to all his Creatures, sent a Revelation to a FEW of 'em ; and left the REST in the same DEPLORABLE Condition, destin'd to Misery.*

AND this, the Author says, is consistent with his *Wisdom, Goodness, and Benevolence*. His Words are :  
 “ For the mere Consideration of the  
 “ Usefulness of a universal Revela-  
 “ tion, and of Mankind's being in  
 “ a DEPLORABLE Circumstance for  
 “ want of it, can be no Argument,  
 “ that as a *Wise, Just, infinitely*  
 “ *Benevolent Being*, he must make  
 “ it universal. Because what does  
 “ not prove he was under an Ob-  
 “ ligation to give it to ANY, can ne-  
 “ ver prove that he was bound to  
 “ afford it to ALL.” So that the sin-  
 gle Question, he says, is, “ Whe-  
 “ ther what God is not obliged to  
 “ vouchsafe to ANY, he may not  
 “ com-

“ communicate to SOME, exclusive  
“ of the REST.”

’TIS certain, if this Doctrine had been propagated in the World, by one, who was suspected not in the *Interest of the Christian Religion*; he would have been treated with all the *Contempt and Indignation, that so high an Affront to the Author of the Universe deserves*. But it seems, those who only appear in the Cause of *Revelation*, are at Liberty to assert any thing, however derogatory to the *Honour of God, and true Religion*, and yet be esteemed as Friend to both. For the Absurdity of this Position, *viz.* “ That  
“ all Mankind being in a DEPLORA-  
“ BLE Condition, for Want of a Re-  
“ velation from *God*, could be no  
“ Argument, that *He*, as an in-  
“ finitely *Wise, Just and Benevo-*  
“ *lent*



“ *lent Being*, would give a Revelation to all Mankind,” appears (*upon the Principles of Carnal Reason, and common Sense,*) to be so flagrant and monstrous in it self, that the Reader will be able to discern, how big it is with *Folly*, without any Argument to exemplify it: He can’t avoid seeing that it stares him full in the Face, and *seems to strike at the very Foundation of God’s Moral Character.*

AND the Argument which the Writer makes use of, to prove it consistent with the Wisdom, Goodness, and Benevolence of *God*, not to give a Revelation to *all Mankind*, is a Contradiction, and subverts it self.

FOR there being no other Reason urged, as he states his QUESTION, why it is consistent with God’s *Wis-*

G

dom,

*dom, Goodness and Benevolence, not to give it to ALL, than, because he was not obliged to give it to ANY; it follows, if He was obliged to give it to any, He was obliged to give it to all: and that He was obliged to give it to some, may be proved to Demonstration in this concise Manner.*

IT is allow'd by this Writer, that *God* has given a Revelation to Part of Mankind; It was therefore, *either reasonable and fit for God, as a wise and good Being, to give that Revelation, or it was not.*

IF it was, Then, *God was under an Obligation to do it, because it was reasonable and fit for Him, as a wise and good Being.*

IF it was not, Then, *God acted without any Regard to the Reason and Fitness of Things, and consequently*

I



quently in an arbitrary, capricious Manner, and made “ *his mere Will* “ *the Rule of his Actions* ; which this Writer allows to be inconsistent with his Nature : And consequently God could not give a *Revelation* to Mankind, unless it was *reasonable and fit in the Nature of the Thing, which creates the Obligation.*

AND therefore, according to this Author’s *cunning State of the Question*, (upon which, he says, *the whole Controversy turns*) there being no other Reason given, why God was not obliged to give a *Revelation* to ALL, than because He was not obliged to give it to ANY ; it follows, He was under an OBLIGATION to give it to ALL, because He was under an OBLIGATION to give it to SOME.

THUS much we thought our selves obliged to say concerning our *Fellow-Labourer*, of whom, at our first setting out, we intended to have taken no notice : But upon a careful perusal of his Performance, we thought it necessary to give these few Hints, in order to establish the *Writer's Character*, and our own *Hypothesis* ; since, from the gross Absurdities which we have shewn him to have fallen into, (*when he is at Variance with himself, concerning a Point, we are both, tho' not by Design, engaged to prove*) the Demonstration will appear yet the stronger, *That Reason and Revelation, separately or jointly consider'd, are not sufficient in Matters of Religion.*

WHICH



WHICH leads to our last general Head ; viz. *The different Opinions and Sentiments of Mankind, concerning Religion.*

IT is evident, Men judge variously, and differ with each other in their Sentiments, upon almost every Thing that is the Subject of Enquiry ; and in nothing more, than *concerning the Will of God* : which *Difference* must arise, either from the Want of those *Powers or Abilities*, which were necessary to the *discerning the Will of God* ; or our *Negligence*, in not making proper *Uses of those Powers and Abilities.*

AND that the whole *Difference* which arises among Mankind concerning the Will of God, is not the Effect of *Negligence*, will most evidently appear, when we consider,  
that

that those who have, with all *possible Care and Attention*, anxiously sought after, and endeavour'd to find out, both by the *Light of Nature and Revelation*, what was True Religion, have yet, after all their painful and laborious Searches, *differed* widely with each other, in their Opinions concerning it.

BUT *if Reason or Revelation were sufficient, it would be impossible, at least, that those who were desirous to know the Will of God, and sincere in their Enquiries, could fail of discovering it.* And yet these unhappy Enquiries have, thro' the want either of *natural Abilities*, or what are generally esteem'd the *Means of Information*, fail'd in that Discovery.

Thus



Thus have we proved,

1st, *From a right Definition of the Term Sufficiency :*

2dly, *From what is meant by Religion :*

3dly, *From the Consideration of the Powers and Abilities of Human Nature :*

4thly, *From the Circumstances and Conditions of Mankind :*

5thly, *From the Nature of a written Revelation :*

6thly, and lastly, *From the different Opinions and Sentiments of Mankind, concerning Religion ; That Reason and Revelation, separately or jointly consider'd, are not SUFFICIENT in Matters of Religion.*

C O N-



## C O N C L U S I O N.

**H**AVING prov'd to *Demonstration*,  
*(upon the Principles merely of Reason)* that both *Reason and Revelation*, *separately or jointly consider'd*, are *insufficient in Matters of Religion*; we presume it will be ask'd, *What is sufficient?* To which we Answer, the IMMEDIATE INSPIRATION of GOD; without which, it will be impossible for Men to perceive the DARK and HIDDEN MYSTERIES of Religion, which are only to be discern'd, thro' the *Influence of the Spirit*; and cannot be attain'd, by the Exercise of mere *human Powers and Abilities*: for in vain might Men endeavour by NATURAL Means to arrive at the Knowledge of SUPERNATURAL Things. The *mere Reason or Wisdom of Man*, can never point out to him the *Things of God*; for we are assured of the Incapacity of *human Wisdom*, to judge concerning *spiritual Things*,  
 which



which can only be *spiritually discern'd* ; and That God will destroy the *Wisdom of the Wise*, and will bring to nought the *Understanding of the Prudent*. Again, *Where is the Wise ? Where is the Scribe ? Where is the Disputer of this World ? Hath not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World ? For after that, in the Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the Foolishness of Preaching, to save them that believe.* Again, *The Foolishness of God is wiser than Men ; and the Weakness of God is stronger than Men. But God hath chosen the foolish Things of the World, to confound the Wise ; and God hath chosen the weak Things of the World, to confound the Things which are mighty, and base Things of the World, and Things which are despis'd, hath God chosen, yea, and Things which are not, to bring to nought Things that are.* All which sufficiently evince the *Weakness and Frailty of Reason, or human Wisdom ; and consequently its Insufficiency in searching out the divine Mysteries of Religion ; for they are not suited to the Enquiries of Philosophy, and*

*vain Speculation*, but are the peculiar Objects of *Faith*, which is the Gift of the *Spirit*; by the Light of which alone, Men are enabled to know the *Things that are of God*, according to the Apostle, when he proves the Necessity of the *immediate Inspiration* of the *Spirit*, in order to discern *spiritual Things*. God (says he) *hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all Things, yea, the deep Things of God. For what Man knoweth the Things of a Man, save the Spirit of Man which is in him? Even so the Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the Things that are freely given to us of God. Which Things also we speak, not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual Things with spiritual. But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discern'd. From whence it evidently follows, that neither Reason*  
*nor*



*nor Revelation* can form in us a Perception of the *Things of God*, without the *immediate Inspiration of the Spirit*; by which our Understandings are enlightened, and prepared to receive what can only be *spiritually discern'd*.

IF then 'tis only thro' the *Spirit*, we can judge of *spiritual Things*; 'tis in vain to pretend to examine them, by the Rules of *Science* and *Philosophy*; the Folly of which has been sufficiently exposed by a famous Author.

“ A true Believer, (says he) a Christian, who  
 “ well understands the Genius of his Religion, does not expect to see it agree with  
 “ the Aphorisms of the Lyceum, nor to find  
 “ it able by the mere *Strength of Reason*,  
 “ to confute the *Difficulties of Reason*:  
 “ He well knows, that *natural Things* bear  
 “ no proportion with *supernatural*; and  
 “ that if a Philosopher was desired to level  
 “ and adjust the *Mysteries of the Gospel*  
 “ with the *Aristotelian* Axioms, it would  
 “ be requiring of him what is inconsistent  
 “ with the Nature of Things. You must  
 “ necessarily make an Option between  
 “ *Philosophy* and the *Gospel*: If you will

“ believe nothing but what is *evident*, and  
 “ agreeable to common Notions, *choose*  
 “ *Philosophy*: If you'll believe the *incom-*  
 “ *prehensible Mysteries of Religion*, take  
 “ *Christianity*, and leave *Philosophy*; for  
 “ to possess *Evidence* and *Incomprehensi-*  
 “ *bility* together, is a Thing impossible.

“ A true Christian, well instructed in  
 “ the *Character of supernatural Truths*, and  
 “ well grounded in the Principles *peculiar*  
 “ *to the Gospel*, will *laugh* at the *Subtle-*  
 “ *ties* of Philosophers, and especially of the  
 “ Sceptics: FAITH will place him above  
 “ the Regions wherein the Tempests of  
 “ Dispute reign; he'll find himself seated,  
 “ where he can hear the Thunder of Ar-  
 “ guments, and Distinctions roar below  
 “ him, without any Disturbance: A Post,  
 “ that will prove an *Olympus*, and the  
 “ *true Temple of Wisemen*; from whence  
 “ he will see in a perfect Tranquility, the  
 “ *Weaknesses of Reason, and the Wandrings*  
 “ *of mortal Men under the Conduct of*  
 “ *such a Guide.*”

ALL which abundantly manifests, the  
 Folly and Vanity of those who have *re-*  
*jected the Spirit*, and placed their *Suffi-*  
*ciency*



*ciency in mere human Reason and EXTERNAL traditional Revelation; since it is through the Spirit only we can discern spiritual Things, and know the Things which are of God. As it is written, the NATURAL Man understandeth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discern'd: Nor can external traditional Revelation convey to us the Knowledge of the Things which are of God, while we are unenlightened by the Spirit; for we are enabled to judge of an EXTERNAL Revelation only by the Light of the INTERNAL Spirit, without which, it would be to us but a dead Letter; and St. Paul saith, the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life.*

THUS have we proved, “ *both Reason and Revelation insufficient in Matters of Religion,*” only to shew Men where their true SUFFICIENCY lies, and that their Strength is solely in God, *who worketh in us both to will, and to do his good Pleasure; for by Grace are ye saved, says the Apostle, through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God.*

SINCE then the Spirit, is that Telescope, through which only we can perceive the Things

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Things

Things of God, that is, the divine Myſteries of Religion, which are conceal'd from, and beyond the Penetration of the *natural Eye*: Let not Men who are void of the *Spirit*, judge concerning the Things of the *Spirit*, for they can only be *ſpiritually discern'd*: And conſequently the IMMEDIATE INSPIRATION of God, is the only SUFFICIENT GUIDE IN MATTERS of RELIGION.

F I N I S.

